

A NEW SPECIES OF *NESOKIA* FROM MESOPOTAMIA

BY

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The National Museum owes to Capt. P. A. Buxton, R.A.M.C., a number of small mammals obtained by him while campaigning in Mesopotamia. Among these there are examples of a *Nesokia* which on comparison with the Museum specimens, all recently determined by Mr. Wroughton (J. B. N. H. S. XVIII. p. 736, 1908), appears to represent a new species of the genus. It may be called—

*NESOKIA BUXTONI*, *sp. nov.*

Size and general characteristics very much as in *N. indica*. Fur not very coarse but more or less mixed with flattened semi-spinous hairs, those across the shoulders of the type, stiffer than in any other member of the genus. General colour above clear sandy fawn (nearest to "cinnamon buff" of Ridgway), lined with the black ends of the longer hairs. Sides clearer and more yellowish. Under surface practically white, the chin, chest, and inner side of limbs white, the belly pale buffy white, with scarcely any greyish at the bases of the hairs, at least in the adult, young specimens having more. Head browner than back. Ears short, almost naked, their few fine hairs white; a small whitish spot behind their basis on the nape. Hands and feet brown with whitish digits. Tail practically naked, its scattered short hairs brown.

Skull not certainly distinguishable from that of other allied species.

*Dimension of the type*, measured in the flesh :—

Head and body, 170 mm; tail, 130; hindfoot, 35; ear, 19.

Skull:—condylo-basal length, 43; condylo-incisive length, 43; zygomatic breadth, 25·8; nasals, 13 × 5; interorbital breadth, 6·5; palatine foramina, 6; antero-posterior diameter of bullæ, 8·1; upper molar series (alveoli) 8·1, (crowns) 7·2.

*Hab*:—Mesopotamia. Type from Amara; other specimens from Kurna and Basra.

*Type*.—Adult male. B. M. No. 18.8.5.5. Original number 209. Collected 24th April, 1918, and presented by Capt. P. A. Buxton.

Judging by the skulls, the members of the genus *Nesokia* prove to be much more closely allied to each other than I had hitherto supposed, it being almost impossible to distinguish with certainty the series of species (or perhaps rather sub-species) which are of the size of *N. indica*, the three larger forms *brachyura*, *scullyi*,

and *bacheri* alone standing out from the rest. But the quality of the fur, and the general colour are fairly constant locally, and in these respects *N. buxtoni* is readily distinguishable by its sandy colouration above and its whitish belly, the only other species which has the upper surface buffy *N. huttoni*, having a buffy greyish belly, wholly different from that of the Mesopotamian Nesoki.

This animal is stated by Capt. Buxton to be very common at Amara, where its burrows are much in evidence. But it was found exceedingly difficult to trap, and now that after much trouble he has succeeded in getting specimens as a memento of the historic Mesopotamian campaign. I am glad to have the opportunity of naming the species in his honour.